ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Neglect of MPLAD projects by district administration

*301. DR. K. MALAISAMY: Will the Minister of STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that district administration, the implementing agency of MPLADS, is not invoking enough interest as done for other works;

(b) whether it is more so in case of MPLADS initiated by certain MPs opposing the ruling Government either at the State or the Centre;

(c) the guidelines/standing instructions to the district administration/ implementing agency for MPLADS while inaugurating or completing the work and the place of concerned MP for such occasions;

(d) whether there have been instances of total neglect and indifference on part of the district administration; and

(e) if so, the devices to correct such violations of guidelines and the action against lapses?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI G.K. VASAN): (a) to (e) A Statement is placed on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) No, Sir. MPLADS has been invoking adequate interest among the District Authorities in the country.

(b) No, Sir. All the States and UT Governments utilize the MPLADS fund for the works recommended by Hon'ble Members of Parliament as per the laid down Guidelines on MPLADS. The District Authorities use MPLADS funds on the works recommended by MP irrespective of the Political Party he belongs to.

(c) As per para 3.22 of the Guidelines on MPLADS, as soon as a work under the Scheme is completed, it should be put to public use. For greater public awareness, for all works executed under MPLADS a plaque (stone/metal) carrying the inscription 'Member of Parliament Local Area

Development Scheme Work' indicating the cost involved, the commencement, completion and inauguration date and the name of the MP sponsoring the project should be permanently erected.

(d) and (e) No Sir. No instance of total neglect of MPLADS implementation by the District Authority has come to the notice of this Ministry.

DR. K. MALAISAMY: Mr. Chairman, Sir, perhaps, you may appreciate me for having put a question in which every MP is involved and very much interested. As such, a little time may be required and you may bear with us for asking enough time, not only for me, but for other Members also. Sir, it is one of the most important schemes launched by the Government of India enabling the Members of Parliament, giving a mechanism to identify and indicate works to the district administration under MPLADS. This is basically meant to bridge the gap left out by any other items of work either by the Central Government or the State Government. Sir, I had been a Member of Parliament in the Lok Sabha. I am now a Member of Parliament here. I have seen what exactly is happening on the field. With my bureaucratic background also and as a Member of Parliament. I am of opinion that this is one of the most important schemes. While implementating the scheme, Sir, to be honest with you, I have seen the DML Government; I have seen the AIADMK Govt. in Tamil Nadu.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You can put your ideas through questions.

DR. K. MALAISAMY: I have seen how the scheme has been implemented during their time. The Minister has given the reply. The hon. Minister has given a reply. Though I have asked several questions—he believes in brevity—he has replied in brief. By nature, he is a decent and nice man. So, there is a need to give an elaborate reply. I hope that he would do that. Sir, it is not only myself, but a number of my colleagues came to me and told me that there is a sea change of how this Scheme was implemented earlier and how it is now being implemented. We have heared about the criminalization of politics. We have also heard about politicisation of administration which is in practice in Tamil Nadu.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please come to your question. I would not allow too much background.

DR. K. MALAISAMY: Sir, I am trying to illustrate how it is being politicised, ignoring the Members of Parliament, though they have identified the works and allotted funds. Sir, as far as I am concerned, I have never given MPLAD Funds for any work outside the Scheme.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please come to your question.

DR. K. MALAISAMY: On the other hand, I have given funds only to tangible items like school buildings, library buildings, community halls or any construction work but not any earth work.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please come to your question.

DR. K. MALAISAMY: Sir, I am not boasting myself. I am just illustrating to get an appreciation from you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You have given enough illustration. Please come to your question. I would not allow other things.

DR. K. MALAISAMY: Sir, since you have insisted that I should put my supplementary, my supplementary is ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Sir, is he giving speech, or putting his supplementary? ...*(Interruptions)*...

DR. K. MALAISAMY: Sir, if Narayanasamy interrupts, I should be given more time. According to the hon. Minister's reply, due priority has been given to the MPLAD works and he has given the statistical data also. Before coming to the House, I read the Annual Report, the Performance Budget, etc. I have all the figures with me. Hon. Chairman may not give me enough time to mention them. So, I am not going into it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You should read the rules.

DR. K. MALAISAMY: Sir, the ground reality in the district is that due priority for MPLAD work has not been given. This is my specific point number one.

The second part is....

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Minister, you reply to the first point.

DR. K. MALAISAMY: Sir, the second part is...

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, no. No second part.

DR. K. MALAISAMY: Sir, the most important part of the first supplementary is...

MR. CHAIRMAN: You should have brought the important point first.

DR. K. MALAISAMY: Sir, Members of Parliament are not at all being recognised. They are being ignored.

Sir, I have got the correspondence from the Director, in which he said that the Member of Parliament should be consulted. Member of Parliament should be given due recognition. They should be called for inauguration. They should be called for foundation-stone ceremony, etc. But, district administration has not done it. Sir, I will illustrate this in only one sentence. Sir, day-before-yesterday,...

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Sir, what is this?

DR. K. MALAISAMY: If you shout, I am also capable of shouting.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Malaisamy, you put your question.

DR. K. MALAISAMY: Sir, day-before-yesterday,...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Don't go to day-before-yesterday. You talk about today.

DR. K. MALAISAMY: I have given funds for Tirubhuvanam for the construction of a library building. After completion, without my knowledge, they have formally inaugurated the complex. Then the message came. Then all our people went there and protested and locked the building. As a result, there was a problem of law and order. The hon. Minister is well aware of it. I want, number one, why priority has not been given. My supplementary is that the Members of Parliament are ignored and they are playing politics.

SHRI G.K. VASAN: Sir, the hon. Member wanted a detailed reply. Regarding part (a), I would submit that since the inception of the MPLADS, the amount released and the expenditure, as on 11th August, 2006, is like this. The release is Rs. 15,486.70 crores. At the same time, the total expenditure, again, as of 11th August, 2006, is around Rs. 13,709 crores. I am giving this information because the percentage sanctioned over release is 96.76 per cent and the utilisation over release of the MPLAD Fund is around 84.08 per cent. Still to be very clear, Sir, I can say that so far about 10,42,884 works at a cost of Rs. 16,345 crores have been recommended. ..(*Interruptions*)..I am coming to the point because I should

be clear to the Member. The percentage of works completed to that of sanctioned is 85.51 per cent. The point is, it may thus be seen that the physical and financial performance of the Scheme is much better than any other scheme. Hence, it cannot be definitely said that the MPLAD Scheme is not evoking interest among district authorities. This is regarding part (a) of the question.

I now come to part (b) of the question. There is only one guideline which is applicable to all the Members, be it Lok Sabha members or Rajya Sabha members. There is absolutely no political colour in it; nor for or against bias under the MPLAD Scheme. The Scheme is given utmost importance because we know it will create infrastructure of national priority like education, health, sanitation, roads etc. which are of utmost importance for the development of the country. The Ministry does not show any discrimination.

The hon. Member has told the House that he was not invited for a particular function. I would like the hon. Member to refer to page 9, para 3.22 of the Guidelines. In addition, instructions have been given to the district authorities that the MP concerned, recommending the work, shall be invited for the inaugural function. Around September-October 2005, the Ministry gave a clear direction to all the officials in the State, including the district officials. I am ready to again give immediate instructions to the officials at the district level. If there is any violation regarding what the Member has said, the Ministry will definitely take it up.

DR. K. MALAISAMY: Sir, with due respect to the Minister, I want to say that it is only on paper; it is not in practice. ...(*Interruptions*)... I do not want to create a controversy on that because I know the Minister very well, and he knows me. Something is happening beyond his knowledge. That is what I am trying to say.

Sir, I come to the other point. I have got reference from the Director. He has, specifically, written how they should function. But the District Administration is not obeying the orders. What are you going to do about that? You are writing left and right, but I will quote umpteen cases where the instructions have been wittingly or unwittingly violated. I can illustrate cases.

I come to my second supplementary. The Minister himself has said that this is the most important Scheme. I entirely agree with him. In such

a situation, when there is a tremendous demand, the amount which is very very inadequate, I want to know whether he can afford to increase it or not. This matter had been discussed several times. And the Minister should see...(*Interruptions*)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let him reply. ...(*Interruptions*)...Let him reply. You please take your seat.

DR. K. MALAISAMY: Luckily the Prime Minister is also here. Let him say that there will be an increase.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Malaisamy, you have taken 15 minutes.

SHRI G.K. VASAN: The unanimous demand by the hon. Members definitely reflects the popularity of the Scheme. The trend of increase in works recommended, sanctioned, funds released and utilised shows the benefit given to the people of the country. The Government is, at the moment, engaged in increasing transparency and accountability in the Scheme so that it could stand the test of time be it trial by the media or a case in the court. I will say that right now the budgetary allocation passed by Parliament for the year 2006-07 is Rs. 1,580 crores. This is at the rate of Rs. 2 crores for a Member of Parliament. At present, there is no proposal, under the consideration of the Government, to raise the annual entitlement.

श्री एस. एस अहलुवालिया: सभापति महोदय, मैं आपके माध्यम से मंत्री महोदय से यह जानना चाहूंगा कि यह एमपी लेड स्कीम 800 सदस्यों के लिए 1600 करोड़ रुपए सालाना देती है और जो गाइडलाइंस लोक सभा के लिए हैं, वही गाइडलाइंस राज्य सभा के लिए भी हैं। लोक सभा की गाइडलाइन्स के लिए हो सकता है कि एक जिले में एक लोक सभा की सीट सीमित हो, ज्यादा से ज्यादा दो सीमित हों और बहुत कम संख्या में तीन जिलों में भी सीमित हो सकती हैं। लेकिन राज्य सभा के लिए पूरा राज्य, और उसको राज्य के किसी भी भाग में अपनी स्कीम देनी होती है और कोई ऐसी स्कीम हो, जो कि पूरे राज्य में एक तरह की यूनिफॉर्म हो, उसके लिए कोई अलग गाइडलाइन्स होनी चाहिए, जो नहीं हैं। क्या सरकार इस पर कोई विचार करेगी जिससे कि उसके इम्लीमेंटेशन में सुविधा हो? यदि कोई भी स्कीम दी जाती है, अगर 18 जिलों में राज्य सभा सदस्य के नाम से कोई स्कीम दी गई है, तो जब तक उसका युटिलाइजेशन सर्टिफिकेट नोडल डिस्ट्रिक्ट को, दूसरे जिले से नहीं आता है, तब तक उसका नेक्स्ट पैसा रिलीज नहीं होता है। अगर पैसा एक ही साथ सब जिलों को भेजा जाए तो और टाइम टू टाइम हर एक जिले से नोडल डिस्ट्रिक्ट को, युटिलाइजेशन सर्टिफिकेट आए तो इसकी फास्ट इम्पलीमेंटेशन हो सकती है।

महोदय, मेरे सवाल का दूसरा भाग यह है कि आज एमपी लेड में भ्रष्टाचार में लिप्त होने के कारण हमारे कुछ साथियों की सदस्यता भी चली गई है, मैं मंत्री महोदय से यह जानना चाहूंगा कि क्या ठेकेदार और अफसरों के बीच में जो करप्शन का नेक्सस है, उसके बारे में आपको कम्पलेंट्स मिली हैं और अगर कम्पलेंट्स मिलती हैं तो उनका निष्पादन आप कैसे करते हैं। इसके बारे में सदन को बताने की कृपा करेंगे और ऐसी कितनी कम्पलेंट्स आपके पास पड़ी हुई हैं।

SHRI G.K. VASAN: Sir as far as the guidelines regarding the MPLAD scheme are concerned, I would like to say that these guidelines have been revisited and revised, from time to time. Sir, in November, 2005, a new set of guidelines was given to the hon. Members which was adopted after a great deal of consultation with all the hon. Members. They were asked to give suggestions, and most of the Members gave their suggestions. Accordingly, the guidelines were framed. However, if there is any new suggestion which our hon. Member, Mr. Ahluwaliaji, wants to give, I can definitely take note of that. As and when the time comes, his suggestions will definitely be taken note of. Sir, this is regarding his first point.

Now, as far as his second point regarding criticism of the scheme is concerned, I would like to say that MPLAD Scheme, in general, is more criticised than appreciated. But I can definitely say that the fact is contrary to the perception. The statistics pertaining to the physical and financial status show that it is the best amongst most of the Central schemes. It is only the MPLAD Scheme which thoroughly gives its various details on a Website. I do no deny the point which the hon. Member has made that there are problems in some cases. But the State agencies, in general, take care of the problems. The Ministry is very concerned with the Members' views. If a Member complains to the Ministry, the Ministry, in general, speaks o the concerned authority in the district and guides them as per the guidelines. It also instructs them to follow guidelines. However, if any such cases are brought to our notice in the coming days, due care will be taken. ...(*Interruptions*)...

श्री कलराज मिश्र: महोदय, ...(व्यवधान)...

श्री एस.एस. अहलुवालिया: सर, ...(व्यवधान)...

श्री सभापति: एक मिनट, एक मिनट। ...(व्यवधान)... एक मिनट मेरी बात सुन लीजिए। ...(व्यवधान)... आप एक मिनट मेरी बात सुन लीजिए। माननीय सदस्य, इसमें कोई संदेह नहीं

है कि यह क्वेश्चन बहुत महत्वपूर्ण है, लेकिन सदन का समय भी महत्वपूर्ण है। अगर आप उचित समझें तो मैं इस प्रश्न को एमपी लेड स्कीम के पास भेज देता हूं। जिन माननीय सदस्य को शिकायत करनी है, सुझाव देने हैं, उनको दे दें। ...(व्यवधान)...

श्री एस. एस. अहलुवालिया: भ्रष्टाचार के आरोप क्या हैं? ...(व्यवधान)...

श्री सभापति: भ्रष्टाचार के बारे में आप वहां पर बोल देना। ...(व्यवधान)... नेक्स्ट।

श्री रुद्रनारायण पाणि: सर, ...(व्यवधान)...

302.* [The question (Shri O.T. Lepcha)... was absent for answer *vide* page 32 infra]

Opening of Suchetgarh-Sialkot Border

*303. SHRI T.S. BAJWA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have again taken up the matter of opening of Suchetgarh-Sialkot border in Jammu and Kashmir with the Government of Pakistan; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) and (b) During the Foreign Secretary level talks in the framework of the Composite Dialogue in June 2004, India had proposed a number of cooperation measures to Pakistan for enhancing people-to-people contact across the International Border and the Line of Control. These proposals included a Jammu-Sialkot bus link. The proposal for a Jammu-Sialkot bus link was reiterated subsequently, most recently during the Foreign Secretary level talks in January 2006. Pakistan has not accepted this proposal.

श्री टी.एस. बाजवा: सभापति जी, मेरा सवाल था कि whether Government have again taken up the matter of opening up of Suchetgarh-Sialkot border in Jammu and Kashmir with the Government of Pakistan. इस संबंध में माननीय मंत्री जी ने जवाब दिया है कि recently जनवरी के महीने में जो फॉरेन सेक्रेटरी लेवल की बातचीत हुई है, उसमें पाकिस्तान ने इस प्रपोजल को रिजेक्ट कर दिया है। जब कश्मीर से मुजफ्फराबाद के लिए बस यात्रा शुरू की गई और पुंछ से रावलकोट के लिए और स्कार्डू रोड के लिए बस सेवा शुरू की गई है, तो मैं इस संबंध में माननीय मंत्री जी से जानना चाहता हूं कि पाकिस्तान की ओर से सुचेतगढ़ से स्यालकोट के लिए बस सेवा का जो प्रपोजल रिजेक्ट किया गया है, इसमें पाकिस्तान को क्या आपत्ति है?